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To: "YMP_SR@ymp.gov" <YMP_SR@ymp.gov>
cc:

Subject: Yucca Mountain Repository

Part of Records Package / Supplement / Correction



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The Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary of Energy
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Mr. Secretary,

The Department of Energy (DOE) reached a major milestone in its mission to develop an underground disposal facility for commercial used nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste when it issued its preliminary site suitability evaluation.

This document is the culmination of nearly two decades of scientific and environmental study. It provides a sound scientific foundation for your decision to recommend Yucca Mountain as a repository site. This compilation of scientific and engineering data about Yucca Mountain fulfills a specific requirement of the nuclear Waste Policy Act for the Energy Department to provide scientific information on those issues being considered prior to recommending a repository site.

The Energy Department and its teams of scientists from the national laboratories and the U.S. Geological Survey have found no evidence to disqualify Yucca Mountain as a site for a permanent repository. Moreover, regulatory, advisory and scientific peer groups, such as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, and the Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste, have continually reviewed this research.

The development of a repository is the safest and most economical way, aside from fuel reprocessing, to dispose of used fuel rods from commercial nuclear power plants and radioactive waste from the nation's defense activities. However, the amount of used fuel could be reduced significantly by allowing reprocessing of nuclear fuel in the U.S. as it is done in several foreign countries. The reprocessing of nuclear fuel was disallowed during the Carter administration after private companies had invested large amounts in construction of facilities which were never allowed to be used. Let us not make the same mistake regarding a used fuel repository. The draft environmental impact statement for Yucca Mountain showed that transportation can be safely conducted and is a much better option than continuing to store used fuel at more than 70 sites around the country. The outstanding record of safety spanning nearly 3,000 shipments of used fuel since the mid-1960s strengthens this approach.

Mr. Secretary, consumers have committed \$17 billion solely for the federal government's nuclear waste management program and the program cannot be delayed further. As a consumer of electricity from Wolf Creek nuclear power plant in Kansas, I encourage you to designate Yucca Mountain as the nation's repository for used nuclear fuel and forward your recommendation to the President for action.

Sincerely,

Elmer Lehmann